



SciVerse ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 30 (2011) 412 – 415

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

WCPCG-2011

The Sexual Variety Seeking Scale

Masood Arefnazari^a Mehdi. Ahmadi^{b*}, Sepideh Bakht^c, Parisa Peyvandi^a, Azar RafatMah^a, Mehdi Shahnazari^a, Bitra Nasrollahi^a

^aDepartment of Psychology, Azad Islamic University, Tehran, Iran

^bBehavioural Research centre, Azad Islamic University, Tehran, Iran

^c General Psychology Department, Faculty of Psychology, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

In the context of Iranian culture, there is a kind of resistance addressing sexual issues. To examine the Sexual Variety Seeking variable, authors reviewed the literature and found no suitable measure regarding this variable in Iranian culture. Authors decided to create a scale measuring this issue indirectly. After defining the sexual variety seeking concept based on the literature, authors devised items in 5 subscales. After thorough examination of the items for several times, scale's face validity was examined. Then the completed scale was administered in a sample of 245 married men and the next step, using factor analysis, test's reliability was examined and its factors were derived. To calculate the internal consistency of the scale, corrected correlations between each item and the total score of subscale were calculated and weak items were omitted. For doing so, our criterion was a correlation below ($r=0.30$). In this step 21 items were omitted. Before this omission, the total scales validity was (0.9375), which increased up to (0.9473). Afterwards, on the basis of total subscales α after omission of each item, weak items in each subscale were examined. In this step, we found that the mean α level for *Idealistic Distortion* is extremely low and then omitted the whole subscale. α levels were calculated for *Sexual partners* ($\alpha=0.90$), *Moral Orientation* ($\alpha=0.81$), *Intimacy Seeking* ($\alpha=0.70$), *Sexual Behaviours* ($\alpha=0.80$) subscales. Afterwards finding KMO in a significant level revealed that our sample size was sufficient. Then based on the rotated procedures (Varimax with Kaiser Normalization) it was indicated that all three remaining factors have a value more than 1.0. The ultimate test format included 46 items in 3 subscales, *Sexual Variety Seeking*, *Moral Orientation* and *Intimacy Seeking*. The Intimacy Seeking subscale (13.19 % of total variance, validity=0.94), measures a kind of sexuality seeking in which the first goal is to establish romantic relationship. The Moral Orientation subscale (23.47 % of total variance, validity=0.83), examines the individual's moral criteria in his sexual relationships. And the *Behavioural Sexual Variety Seeking* subscale (11.15 % of total variance, validity=0.84), which is a combination of sexual behaviours and sexual partners subscales, measures the person's tendency to have sex with various partners or in various ways.

© 2011 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of the 2nd World Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Guidance.

Keywords: Sexual variety seeking; Intimacy seeking; Moral orientation; Behavioural sexual variety seeking

1. Introduction

Sexual variety seeking is likely to have been a recurrent feature of human evolutionary history, occasionally generating substantial reproductive benefits for ancestral members of both sexes (Kelly and Dunbar, 2001; Little,

* Masood Arefnazari. Tel.: +98-21-26211030

E-mail address: ayin.ngo@gmail.com.

Cohen, Jones, and Belsky, 2007; Little, Jones, Penton-Voak, Burt, and Perrett, 2002; Scheib, 2001; Schmitt, 2005 and Buss, 2003).

The first attempts to understand and assessment of sexuality refers to that of Kinsey (1953) who devised an instrument to assess the individual's sexual orientation (Ritter & Terendrup, 2002). Afterwards, there were a lot of tests and scales developed to assess sexual orientation (Ritter & Terendrup, 2002). For example only in a book like "latest sexual tests" (Smith & Doe, 2000) you can find at least 30 tests regarding this issue. Although these tests are not psychometrically tested, they show the public's attention toward this issue. Regardless of the huge number of tests which scientifically or not, assess the various aspects of sexuality, the authors of the present study didn't find any kind of tests which assesses the desire for sexual variety. In some studies (for example, Schmitt, 2003), the respondents were asked to determine how many sexual partners they wish to have in a particular period of time. But unlike the western cultures, in cultures with a more conservative approach toward revealing personal sexual issues like Iran, it is not possible to assess this aspect of sexuality in such a direct format. To do so, we were encouraged to devise an instrument which asks about the issue in more subtle ways.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and data collection

The participants of this study were selected on a random base and included 245 male participants who were asked to complete the Sexual Variety Scale (SVSS) and an investigator-constructed questionnaire which collected demographic data. All questionnaires were administered individually. A summary of the project were explained for each participant and he was asked to complete the questionnaires, emphasizing on the fact that their name or other private data were not to be used individually.

2.2. Preparing the scale

The provision of a proper definition of "the sexual variety seeking" concept was the first step of constructing this scale. The related literature was reviewed by the authors and a similar concept was found in the work of Larsen and Buss (2008) who pointed to the concept of *desire for sexual variety* in their discussions on evolutionary psychology. According to Larsen and Buss (2008) and other researchers (for example, Regan and Atkins, 2006) the authors provided a comprehensive definition which included both behavioural and cognitive sexual variety seeking as follows:

Sexual variety seeking is a type of sexual behaviour which regardless of the partners' commitment or their intimacy, is solely directed to emotional satisfaction. It is goal-directed behaviour and aims the sexual relationship and has cognitive and behavioural components. The cognitive component refers to the degree of individual's preoccupation with sexual materials and the behavioural component refers to the individual's attempts for having sex with new partner or in new way.

On the basis of this definition and research literature five subscales were designed for the whole scale:

- I. Variety Seeking in Sexual Behaviour (for example, Kinsey et al, 1953).
- II. Variety Seeking in Sexual Partners (for example, Kinsey et al, 1953).
- III. Intimacy Seeking (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Strenberg & Barnes, 1988).
- IV. Moral Orientation (Foucault, 1987; Walkowitz, 1981; Weitzer, 2000)
- V. Idealistic distortion (this subscale was devised to assess the respondent's resistance about revealing their sexual issues, which are often accompanied by some resistance in Iranian culture)

Then, 81 item were devised for these five subscales which were randomly arranged in the scale's format. The participant should respond to each item on a Likert 5-point format (from totally disagree to totally agree). To prevent mental set and increasing the scale's accuracy some of the items were designed in an opposite direction and therefore scored in opposite direction.

3. Validity & Reliability

3.1. Content Validity

To examine the content validity of the scale it was reviewed and edited by a number of professional editors and had a number of corrections. Then it was edited by some fellow psychologists. The congruency of this scale with the construct it is intended to assess was approved by these professionals. According to these professionals' suggestions some other items were added.

3.2. Internal Consistency

First of all, the corrected correlations between each item with total score were calculated for all items and weak items in which had a negative or statistically low correlation ($r < 0.30$) were omitted from the total scale. Total validity coefficient before omission of weak items was 0.9375. After the omission this coefficient increased up to 0.9473.

The next step was to examine the correlation between each item and its related subscale. Results revealed that *Idealistic Distortion* has an overall low α . Table 1. Shows the " α " coefficient for each subscale after the omission of weak items.

Table 1. α coefficients for each subscales

| Subscale | n | n. of final items | N. of omitted items | α |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Idealistic Distortion | 302 | 4 | 0 | 0.6217 |
| Intimacy Seeking | 302 | 9 | 1 | 0.7063 |
| Variety Seeking in partners | 302 | 21 | 0 | 0.9038 |
| Moral Orientation | 302 | 10 | 1 | 0.8154 |
| Variety Seeking in behaviours | 302 | 9 | 2 | 0.8059 |

3.3. Factor Analysis

To conduct the factor analysis, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) criterion was tested and results showed that the sample size was sufficient ($KMO > 0.90$, $\alpha < 0.01$).

After conducting the factor analysis methods, results revealed that three factors were derived from the whole questionnaire, which together explained 47% of the total variance. Intimacy Seeking, Behavioural Sexual Variety Seeking and Moral Orientation respectively explained 13.19, 23.47 and 11.15 per cent of the total variance of the questionnaire.

It should be noted that variety seeking in sexual behaviour and variety seeking in sexual partners were considered as two separate subscales but considering the results of the questionnaire factor validity, they were merged together and was named the *Behavioural Sexual Variety Seeking*.

To confirm the scale's internal consistency, it was administered in a group.

AN statistical analysis resulted in a 10 item scale with three subscales:

- I. *Behavioural Sexual Variety Seeking*: this subscale has 25 items which assesses the degree of individual's desire for variety seeking in sexual behaviors or sexual partners. which
 - II. *Moral Orientation*: this subscale has 10 items which assess the individual's attitude toward sexual relationships. The main aim of this subscale was to examine the person's moral criteria for sexual issues. This subscale attempts to determine whether the individual has some organized principles for himself or not.
 - III. *Intimacy Seeking*: This subscale which has 9 items is designed to assess a specific kind of sexual variety seeking which aims to find a "secure base" for attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1989)
- Statistical analysis revealed a very good reliability for this scale ($\alpha = 0.93$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the three subscales' reliability was respectively 0.94, 0.83 & 0.84 for *Behavioural Sexual Variety Seeking*, *Moral Orientation* and *Intimacy Seeking*.

5. Discussion:

Although, on the basis of our results, this scale has shown good psychometric properties, the authors are aimed to improve their tests qualities.

The present scale was originally designed to assess sexual variety seeking in male respondents, which is one of the major limitations of the scale. To overcome this limitation, the authors are intended to provide a new format, suitable for both genders. They are also seeking to provide some gender specific and age specific norms which help the users of the scale to better interpret their results.

References

1. Buss, D. M. (2003). *The evolution of desire* (rev. ed.). New York: Basic Books.
 2. Foucault M. (1987) *The history of sexuality* Pantheon Books.
 3. Hazan C., Shaver P. (1987) Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process, *journal of personality, attachment psychology* S2, 511-524.
 4. Kelly, S., and Dunbar, R. I. M. (2001). Who dares, wins: heroism versus altruism in women's mate choice. *Human Nature*, 12, 89-105.
 5. Kinsey A., Pomeroy W., Martin C. and Gebhard P. (1953) *Sexual Behavior in the Human female*. W.B.: Saunders.
 6. Larsen, R. J. & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality Psychology, Domains of Knowledge about Human Nature*, McGraw-Hill. International Edition, p. 266.
 7. Little, A. C., Cohen, D. L., Jones, B. C., and Belsky, J. (2007). Human preferences for facial masculinity change with relationship type and environmental harshness. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, 61, 967-973.
 8. Little, A. C., Jones, B. C., Penton-Voak, I. S., Burt, D. M., and Perrett, D. I. (2002). Partnership status and the temporal context of relationships influence human female preferences for sexual dimorphism in male face shape. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B*, 269, 1095-1100.
 9. Regan, P. C., and Atkins, L. (2006). Sex differences and similarities in frequency and intensity of sexual desire. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 34, 95-102.
 10. Ritter, Y.K. & Terendrup, A.I. (2002) Handbook of affirmative psychotherapy with lesbians and gay men.
 11. Scheib, J. E. (2001). Context-specific mate choice criteria: women's trade-offs in the contexts of long-term and extra-pair mateships. *Personal Relationships*, 8, 371-389.
 12. Schmitt, D.P. (2005). Sociosexuality from Argentina to Zimbabwe: A 48-nation study of sex, culture, and strategies of human mating. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28, 247-275.
 13. Schmitt, D. P. (2003). Universal sex differences in the desire for sexual variety: tests from 52 nations, 6 continents & 13 islands. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 85, No. 1, pp. 85-104.
 14. Sternberg R. J. and Barnes M.L. (Eds) (1988) *The Psychology of Love*, London, Yale University Press.
- Weitzer R. (2000) *Sex for Sale* Routledge-304). New York: E-Publishing Inc.